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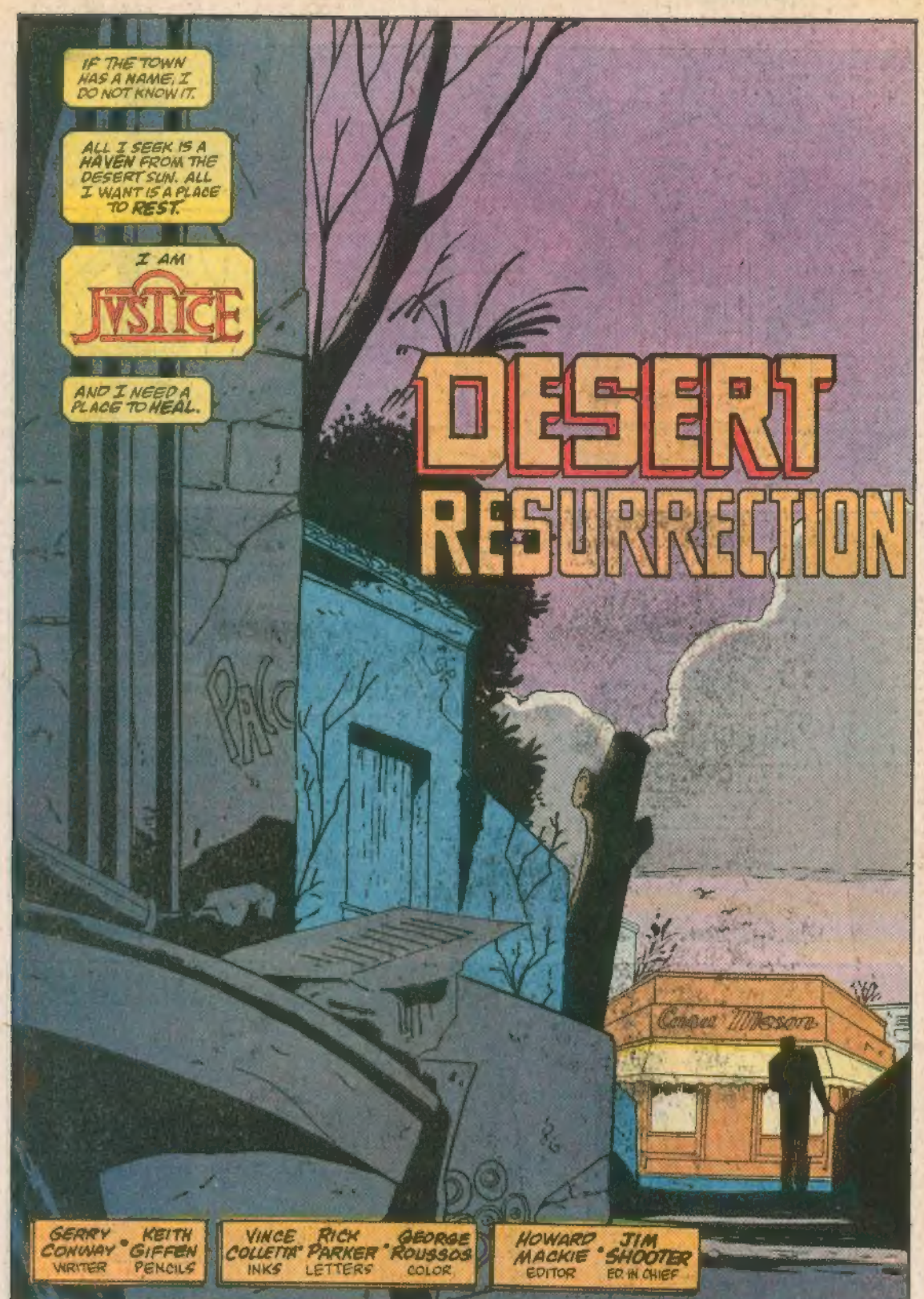
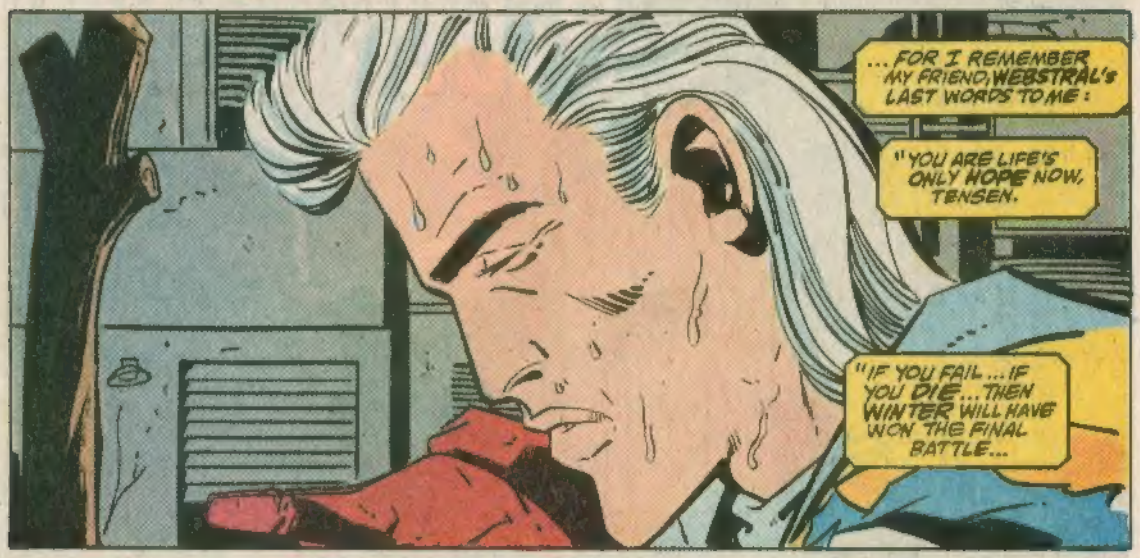
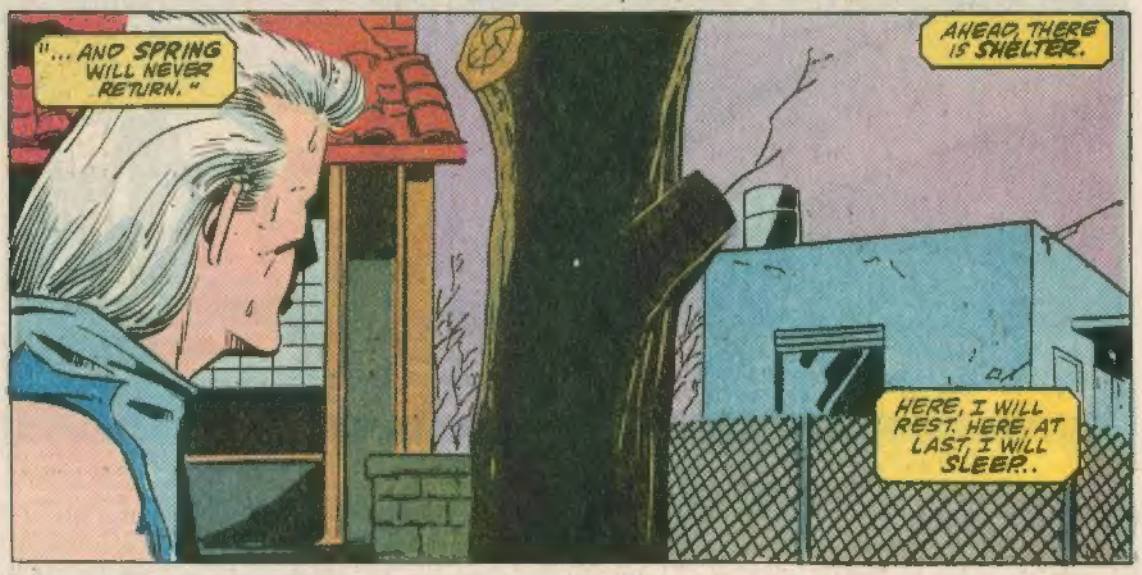
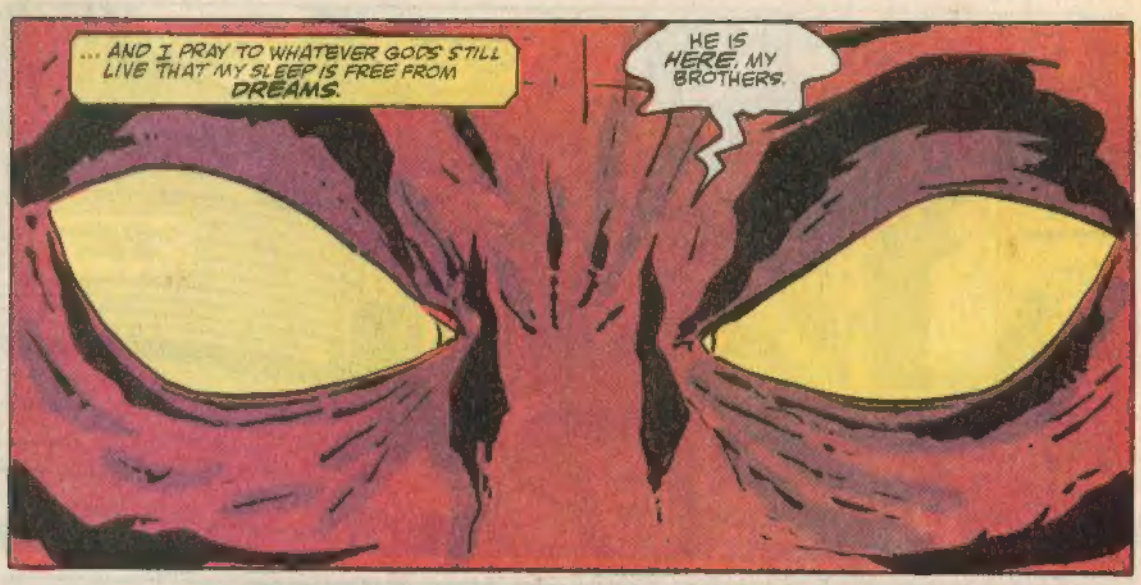


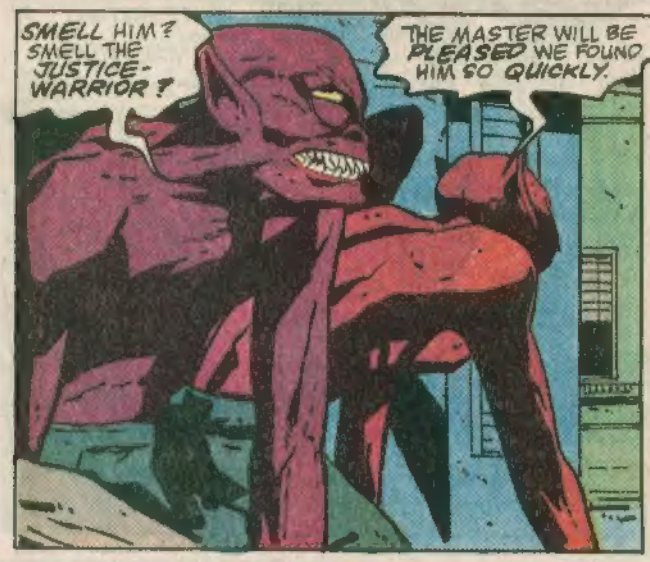
JUSTICE™ Vol. 1, No. 11, September, 1987. Published by MARVEL COMICS, A NEW WORLD COMPANY. James E. Galton, President; Stan Lee, Publisher; Michael Hobson, Group Vice-President; Milt Schiffman, Vice President, Production. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. Published monthly. Copyright © 1987 by Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. All rights reserved. Price 75¢ per copy in the U.S. and 95¢ in Canada. Subscription rate $9.00 for 12 issues; Canada and foreign $11.00 Printed in the U.S.A. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended and any similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the conditions that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. MARVEL and JUSTICE (including all prominent characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof) are trademarks of the MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, INC. **POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO JUSTICE, 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016.**

MY WOUNDS BURN WITH A MEMORY OF SUNFIRE.
EVERY STEP IS AN AGONY.
BUT I CONTINUE IN SPITE OF THE PAIN-- OR PERHAPS BECAUSE OF IT...

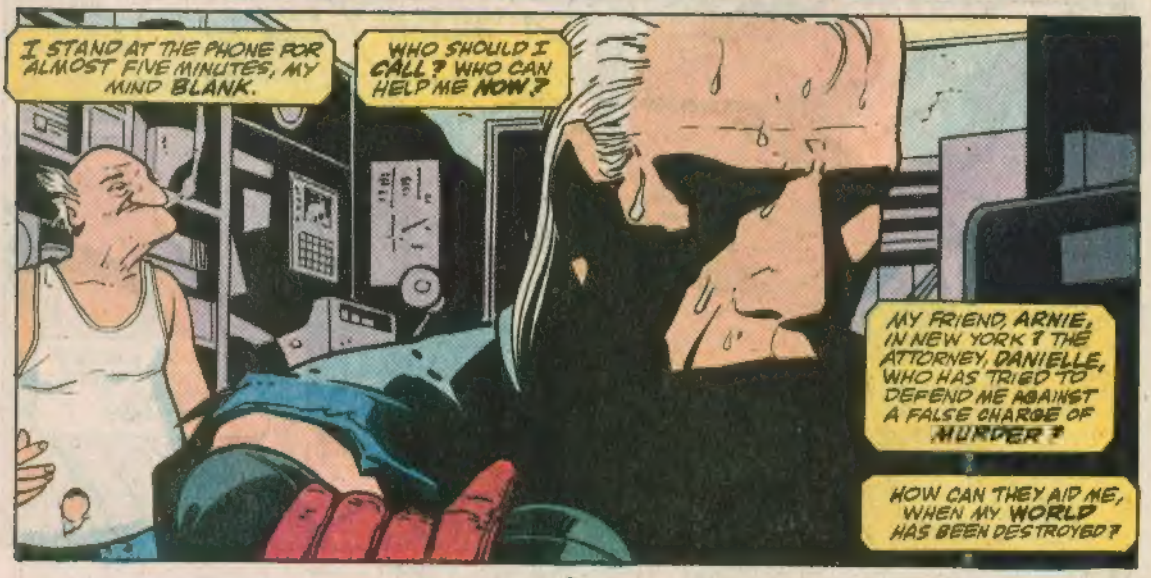

...FOR I REMEMBER MY FRIEND, WEBSTRAL'S LAST WORDS TO ME:
"YOU ARE LIFE'S ONLY HOPE NOW, TENSEN.
"IF YOU FAIL...IF YOU DIE...THEN WINTER WILL HAVE WON THE FINAL BATTLE...

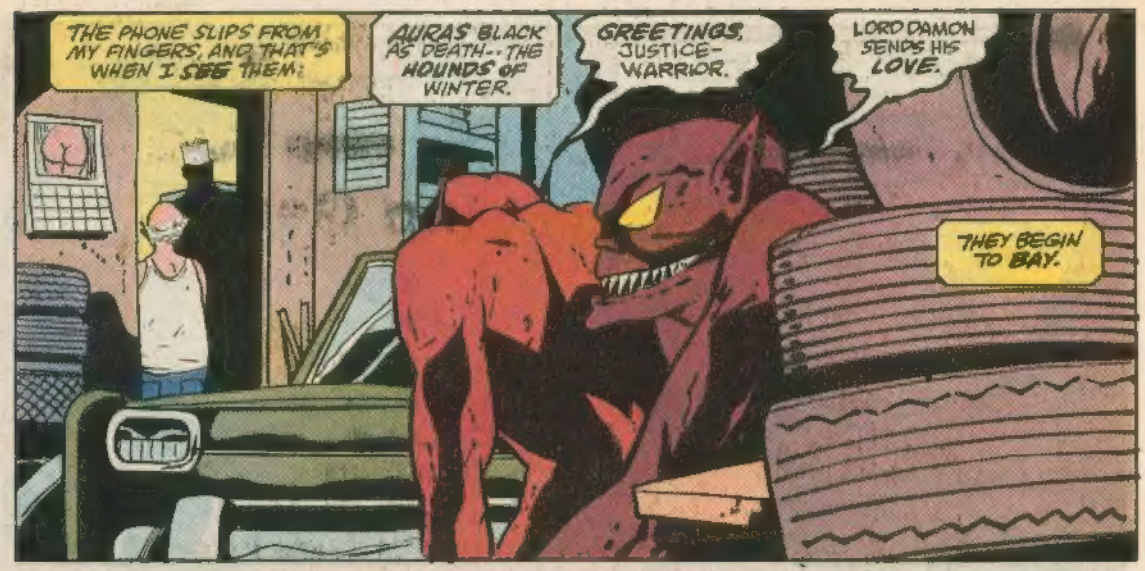

"...AND SPRING WILL NEVER RETURN."
AHEAD, THERE IS SHELTER.
HERE, I WILL REST. HERE, AT LAST, I WILL SLEEP..

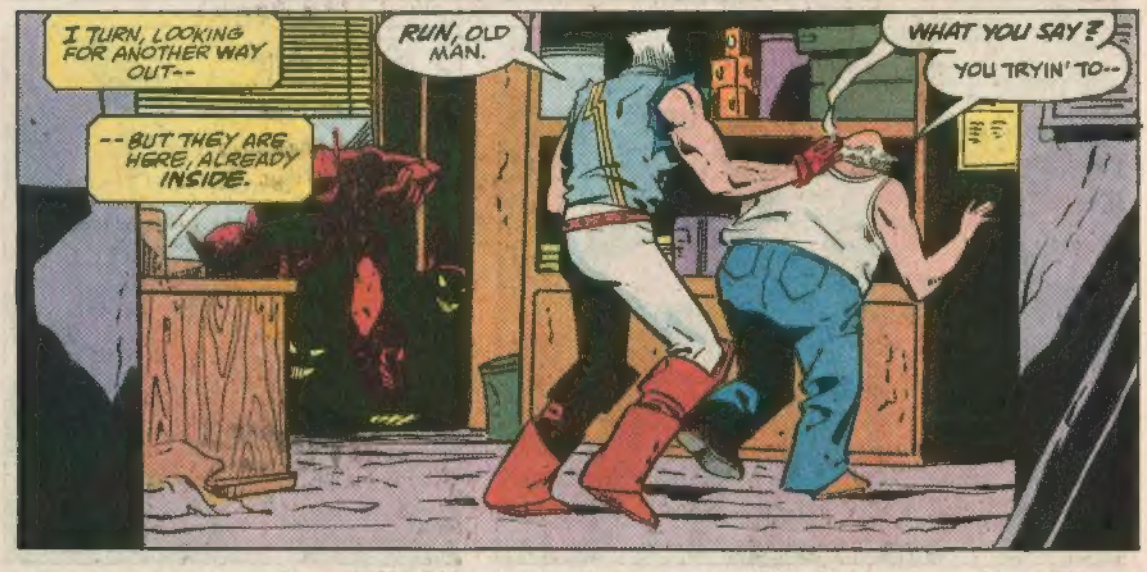

... AND I PRAY TO WHATEVER GODS STILL LIVE THAT MY SLEEP IS FREE FROM DREAMS.
HE IS HERE, MY BROTHERS.


SMELL HIM? SMELL THE JUSTICE-WARRIOR?
THE MASTER WILL BE PLEASED WE FOUND HIM SO QUICKLY.

LET US PLAY WITH HIM.
I WANT TO HEAR HIM SCREAM.

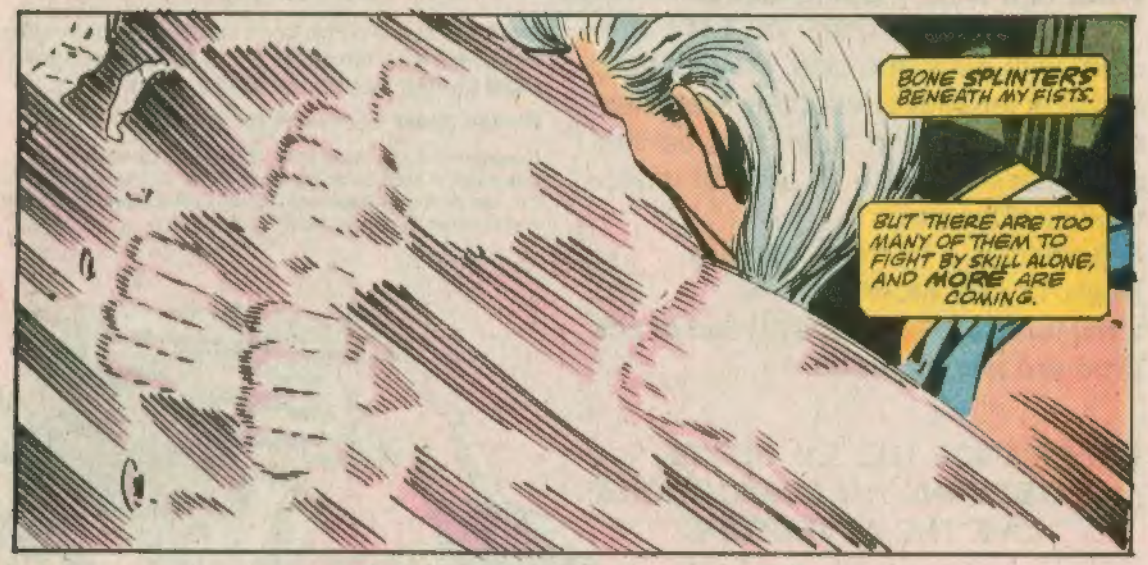

I STAND AT THE PHONE FOR ALMOST FIVE MINUTES, MY MIND BLANK.
WHO SHOULD I CALL? WHO CAN HELP ME NOW?
MY FRIEND, ARNIE, IN NEW YORK? THE ATTORNEY, DANIELLE, WHO HAS TRIED TO DEFEND ME AGAINST A FALSE CHARGE OF MURDER?
HOW CAN THEY AID ME, WHEN MY WORLD HAS BEEN DESTROYED?

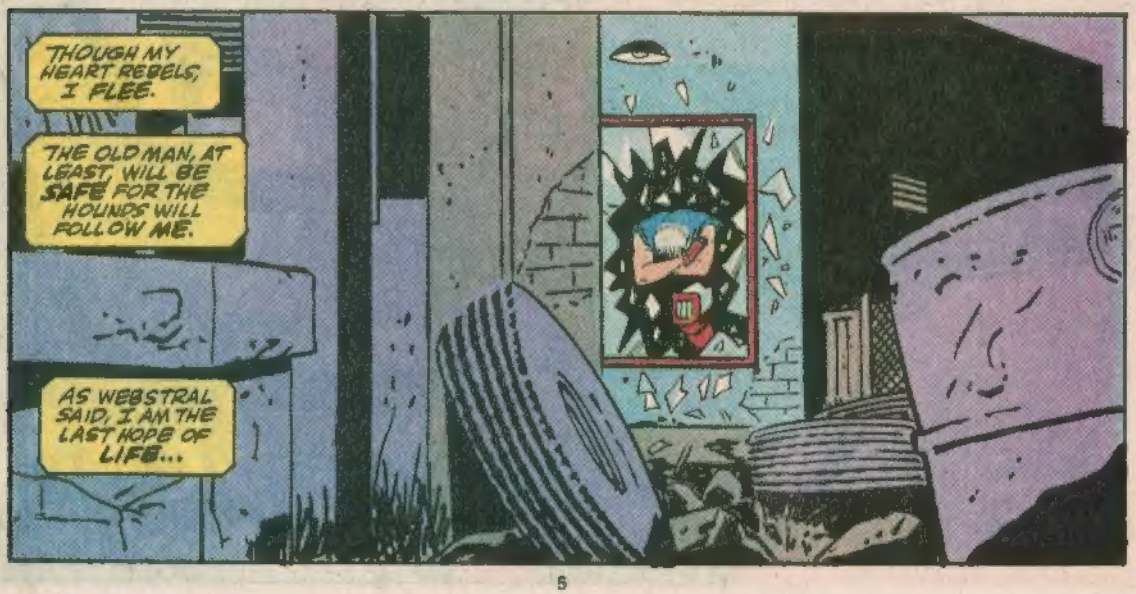

THE PHONE SLIPS FROM MY FINGERS, AND THAT'S WHEN I SEE THEM:
AURAS BLACK AS DEATH--THE HOUNDS OF WINTER.
GREETINGS, JUSTICE-WARRIOR.
LORD DAMON SENDS HIS LOVE.
THEY BEGIN TO BAY.

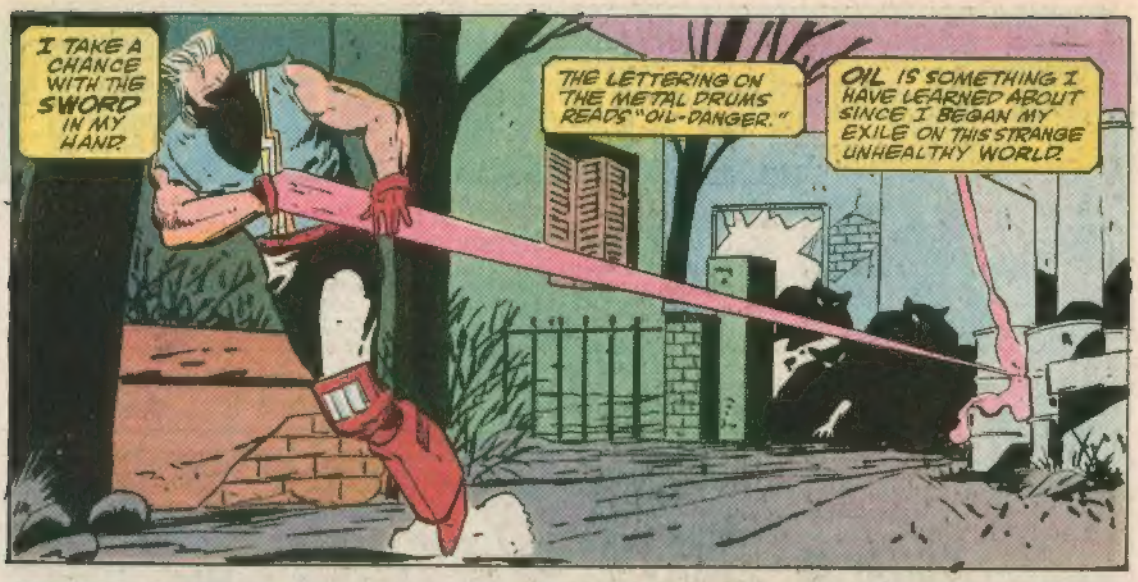

I TURN, LOOKING FOR ANOTHER WAY OUT--
--BUT THEY ARE HERE, ALREADY INSIDE.
RUN, OLD MAN.
WHAT YOU SAY?
YOU 'TRYIN' TO--

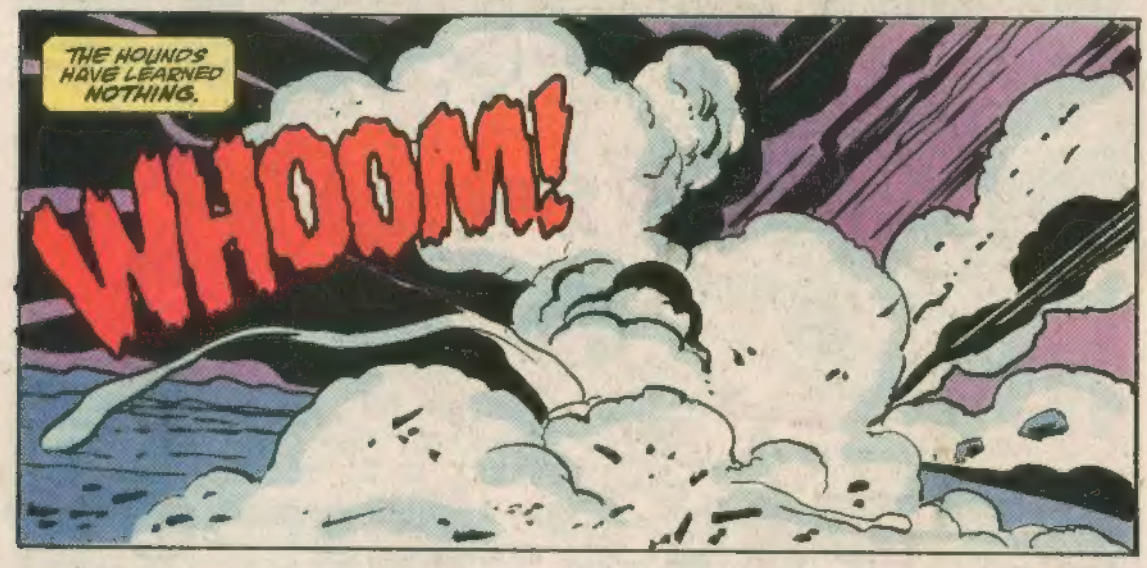
THEY'RE MY DEATH, OLD MAN.
AND THEY'LL BE YOUR DEATH, TOO, IF YOU DON'T RUN.
HE RUNS.
WITHOUT WAITING FOR THE HOUNDS TO STRIKE, I ATTACK.

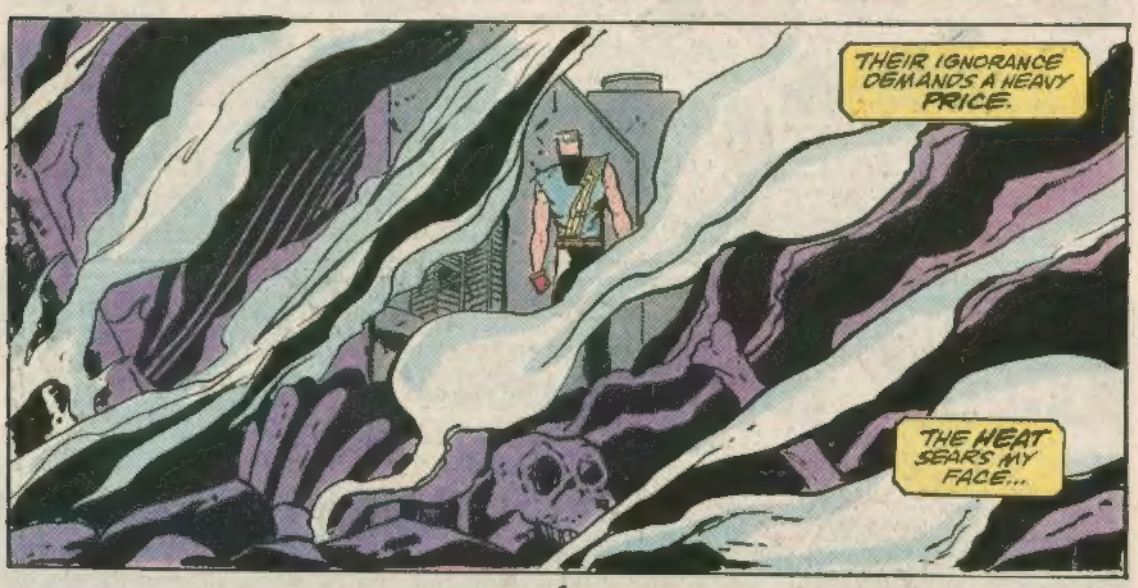
THE SWORD OF JUSTICE IN MY RIGHT HAND IS STILL TOO WEAK TO BE RELIABLE--
--BUT A JUSTICE-WARRIOR IS TRAINED IN MANY SKILLS.
DETERMINATION FUELS ME.
PAIN IS FORGOTTEN.
KTHAK!

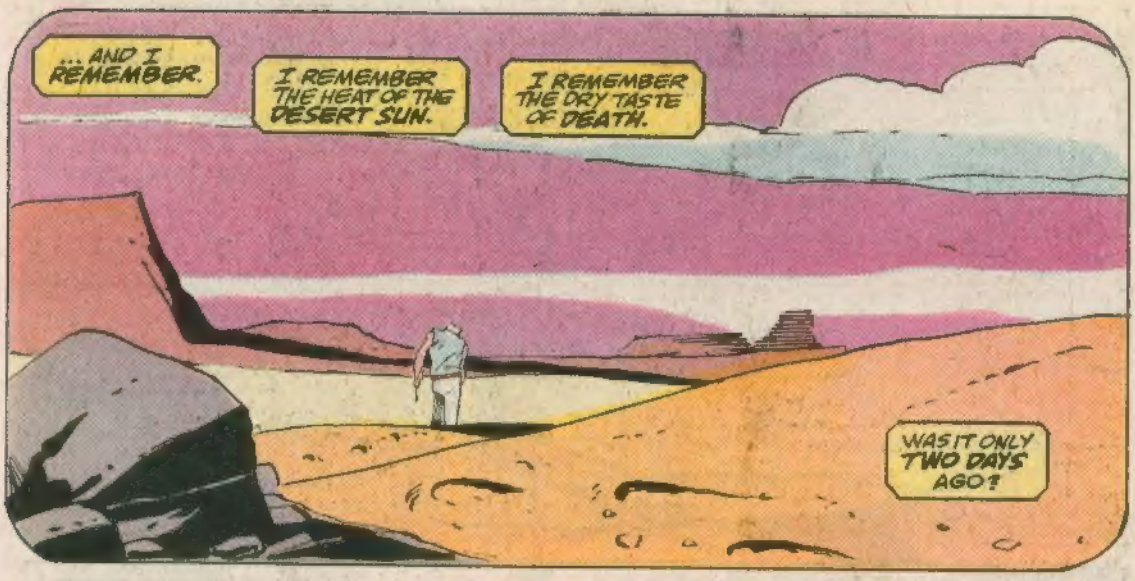

BONE SPLINTERS BENEATH MY FISTS.
BUT THERE ARE TOO MANY OF THEM TO FIGHT BY SKILL ALONE, AND MORE ARE COMING.

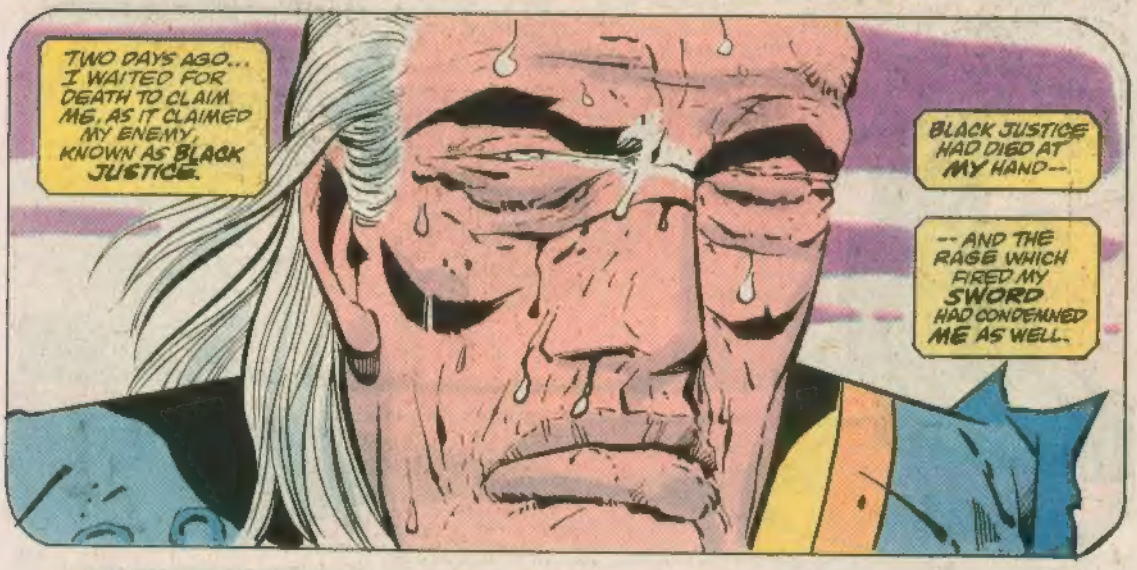

THOUGH MY HEART REBELS, I FLEE.
THE OLD MAN, AT LEAST, WILL BE SAFE FOR THE HOUNDS WILL FOLLOW ME.
AS WEBSTRAL SAID, I AM THE LAST HOPE OF LIFE...

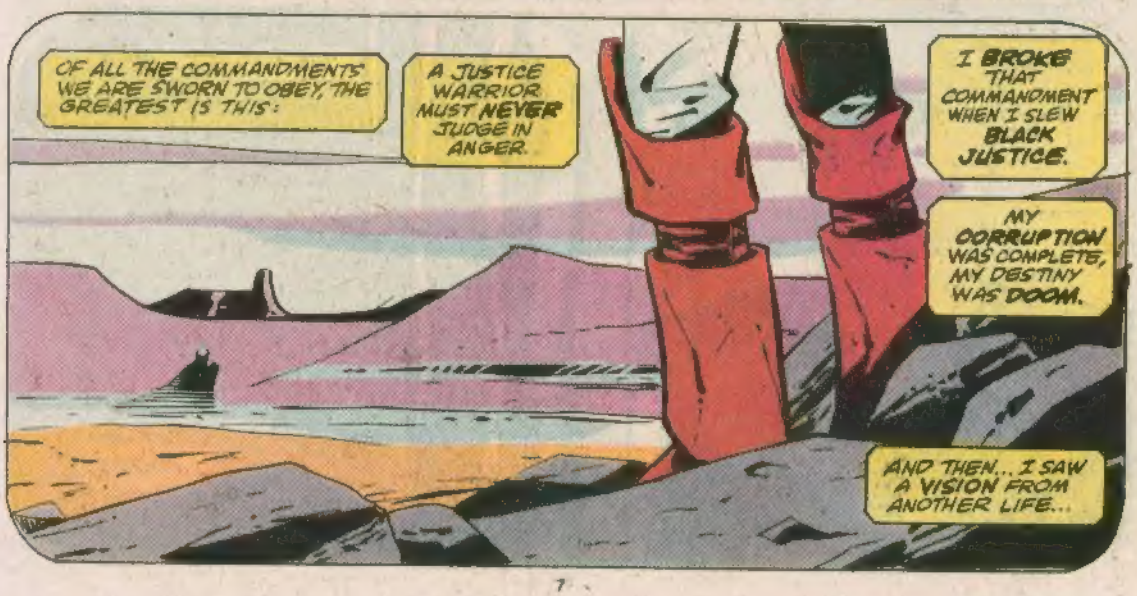

I TAKE A CHANCE WITH THE SWORD IN MY HAND!
THE LETTERING ON THE METAL DRUMS READS "OIL-DANGER."
OIL IS SOMETHING I HAVE LEARNED ABOUT SINCE I BEGAN MY EXILE ON THIS STRANGE UNHEALTHY WORLD!

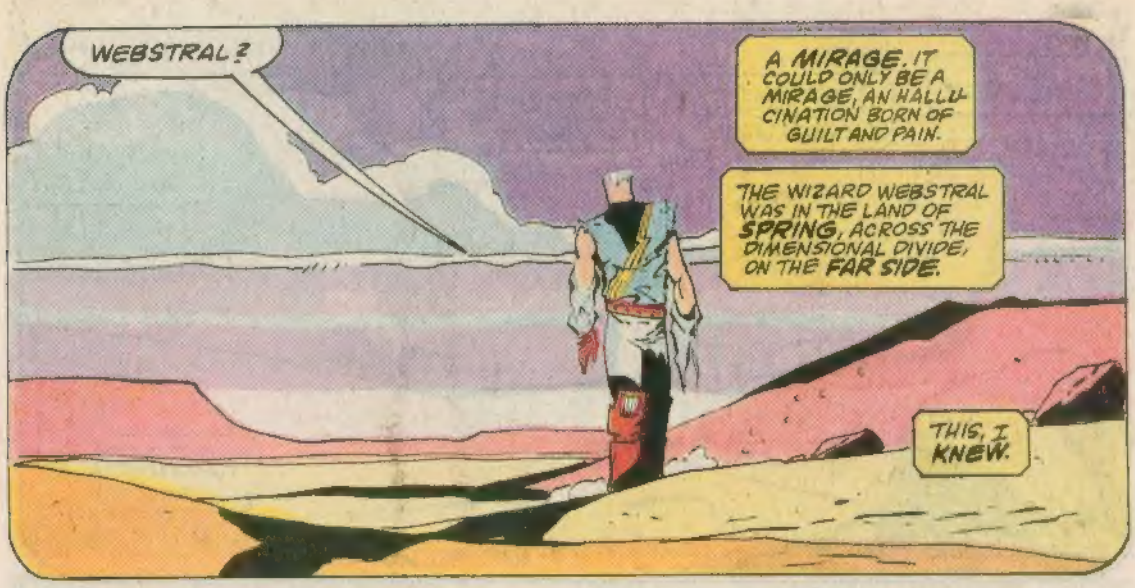

THE HOUNDS HAVE LEARNED NOTHING.
WHOOM!

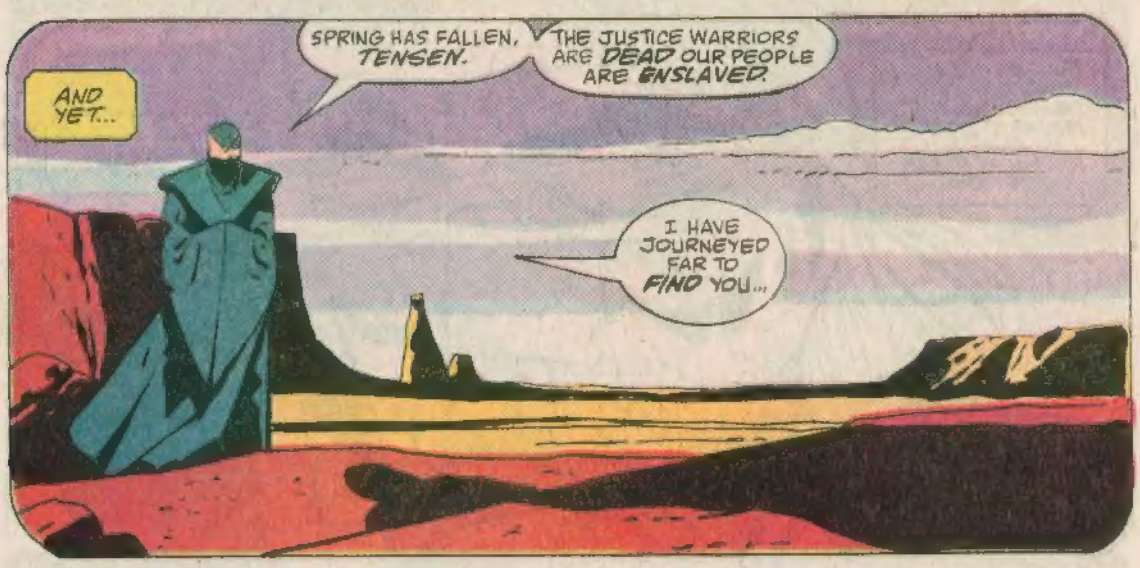

THEIR IGNORANCE DEMANDS A HEAVY PRICE.
THE HEAT SEARS MY FACE...


...AND I REMEMBER.
I REMEMBER THE HEAT OF THE DESERT SUN.
I REMEMBER THE DRY TASTE OF DEATH.
WAS IT ONLY TWO DAYS AGO?


TWO DAYS AGO... I WAITED FOR DEATH TO CLAIM ME, AS IT CLAIMED MY ENEMY, KNOWN AS BLACK JUSTICE.
BLACK JUSTICE HAD DIED AT MY HAND--
--AND THE RAGE WHICH FIRED MY SWORD HAD CONDEMNED ME AS WELL.


OF ALL THE COMMANDMENTS WE ARE SWORN TO OBEY, THE GREATEST IS THIS:
A JUSTICE WARRIOR MUST NEVER JUDGE IN ANGER.
I BROKE THAT COMMANDMENT WHEN I SLEW BLACK JUSTICE.
MY CORRUPTION WAS COMPLETE, MY DESTINY WAS DOOM.
AND THEN... I SAW A VISION FROM ANOTHER LIFE...

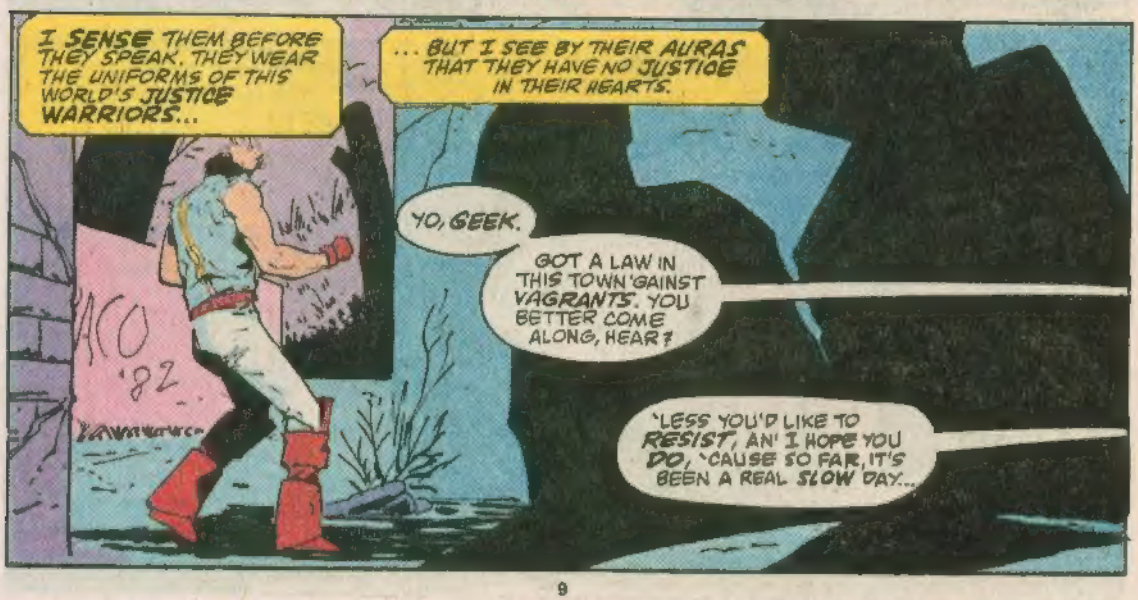

WEBSTRAL?
A MIRAGE. IT COULD ONLY BE A MIRAGE, AN HALLUCINATION BORN OF GUILT AND PAIN.
THE WIZARD WEBSTRAL WAS IN THE LAND OF SPRING, ACROSS THE DIMENSIONAL DIVIDE, ON THE FAR SIDE.
THIS, I KNEW.


AND YET...
SPRING HAS FALLEN, TENSEN.
THE JUSTICE WARRIORS ARE DEAD OUR PEOPLE ARE ENSLAVED.
I HAVE JOURNEYED FAR TO FIND YOU...

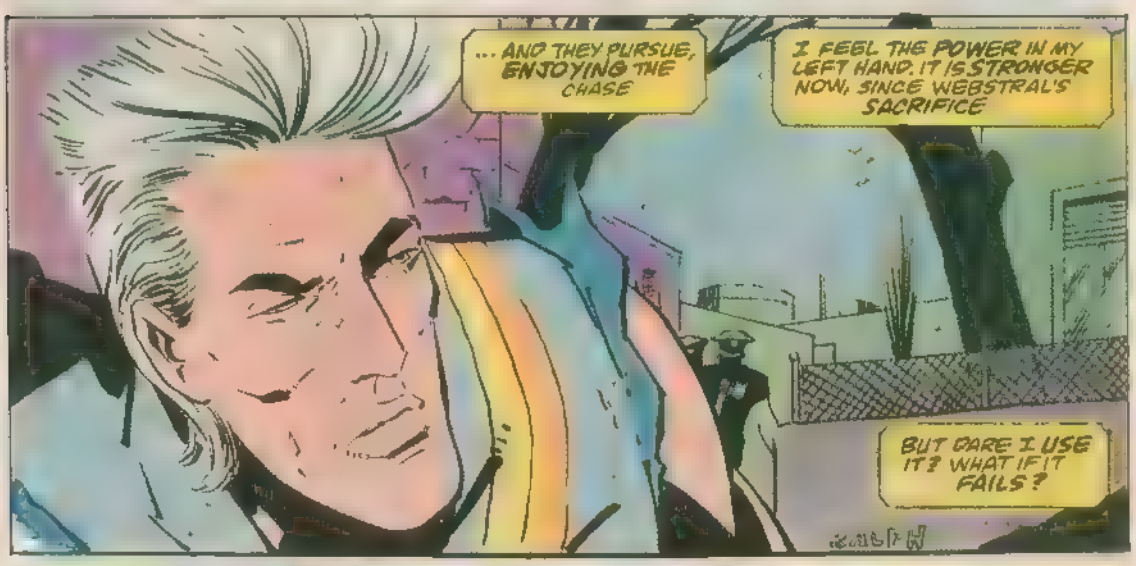
..FOR YOU WERE THE AGENT OF SPRING'S DESTRUCTION...
... AND ONLY YOU MAY HELP HER RISE ANEW.
THE MEMORY...
...FADES.

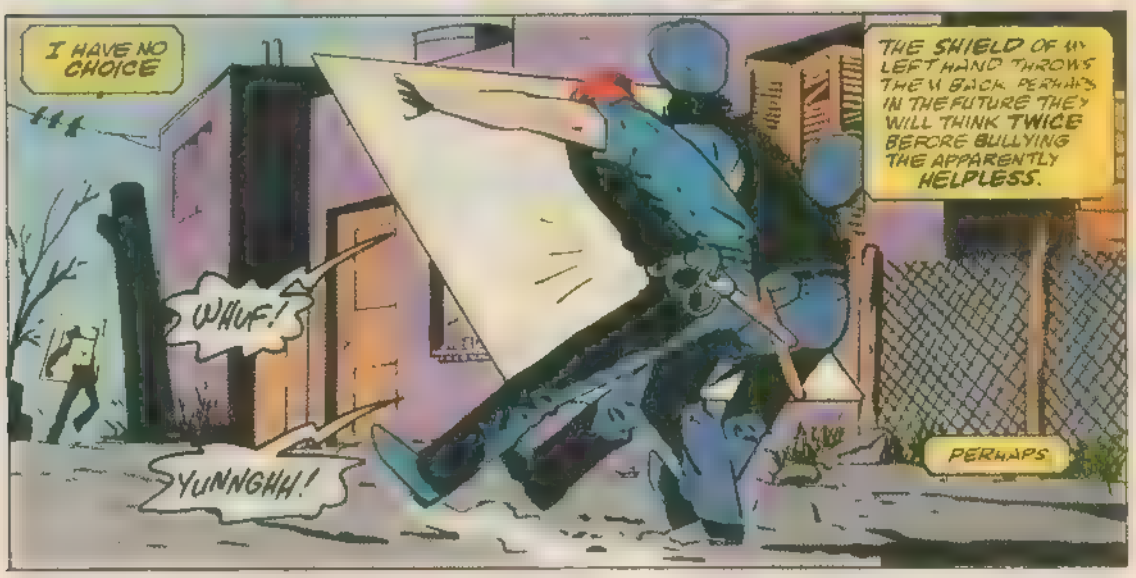
WHAT IS THE NAME OF THIS TOWN?
I DON'T KNOW.
ALL I SEEK IS A PLACE TO REST...

... A PLACE TO HEAL.
YO, CARSON... LOOKS LIKE WE GOT US ANOTHER DRIFTER.
'LEAST HE'S NOT A BEANER.
MIGHT AS WELL ROUST HIM.


I SENSE THEM BEFORE THEY SPEAK. THEY WEAR THE UNIFORMS OF THIS WORLD'S JUSTICE WARRIORS...
... BUT I SEE BY THEIR AURAS THAT THEY HAVE NO JUSTICE IN THEIR HEARTS.
YO, GEEK.
GOT A LAW IN THIS TOWN 'GAINST VAGRANTS. YOU BETTER COME ALONG, HEAR?
'LESS YOU'D LIKE TO RESIST, AN' I HOPE YOU DO, 'CAUSE SO FAR, IT'S BEEN A REAL SLOW DAY...

I HEAR THE VICIOUS EAGERNESS IN THEIR VOICES--THEY ARE CORRUPTED BY ANGER, LIKE SO MANY IN THIS WORLD.
CORRUPTED AS I WAS CORRUPTED
AGAIN I FLEE


... AND THEY PURSUE, ENJOYING THE CHASE
I FEEL THE POWER IN MY LEFT HAND. IT IS STRONGER NOW, SINCE WEBSTRAL'S SACRIFICE
BUT DARE I USE IT? WHAT IF IT FAILS?

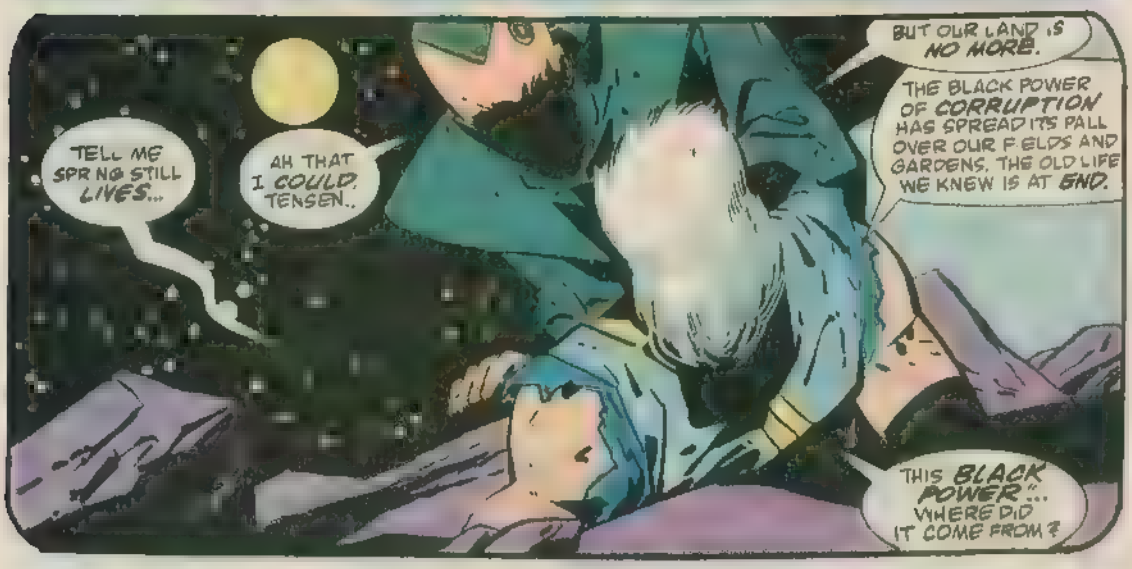

I HAVE NO CHOICE
THE SHIELD OF MY LEFT HAND THROWS THEM BACK. PERHAPS IN THE FUTURE THEY WILL THINK TWICE BEFORE BULLYING THE APPARENTLY HELPLESS.
WHUF!
YUNNGHH!
PERHAPS

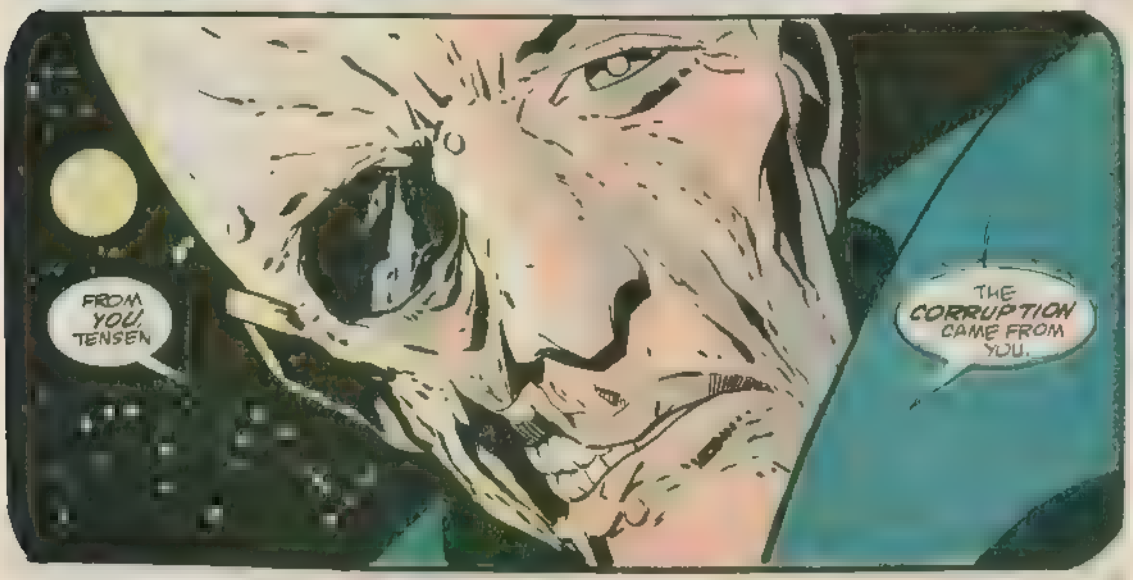
ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN I FIND A VEHICLE.
AT LAST A HAVEN.

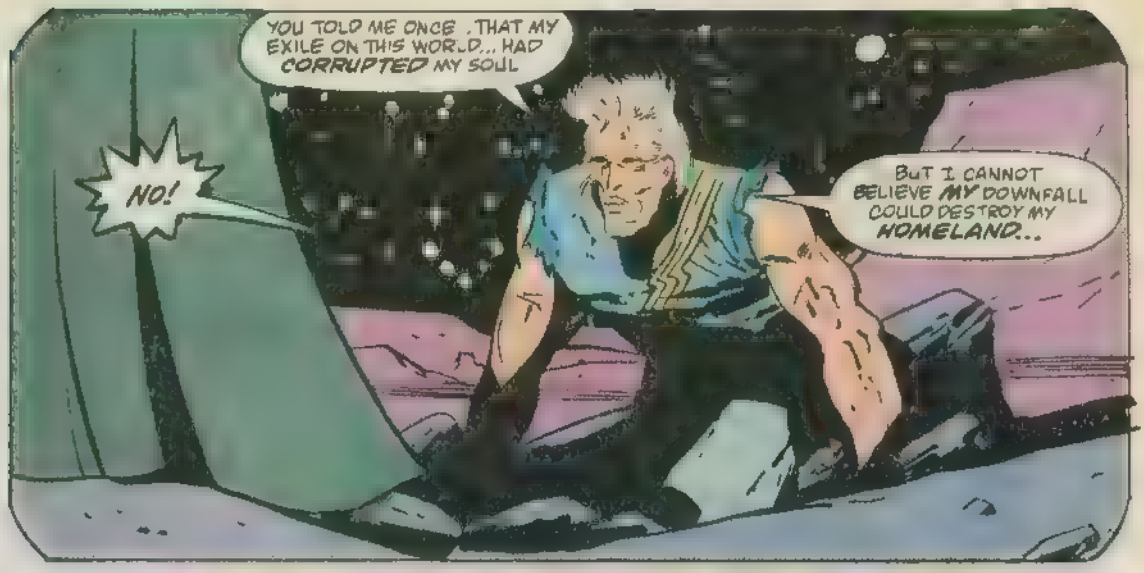
I FEEL NO ANGER TOWARD THOSE "POLICEMEN" BECAUSE I UNDERSTAND THE HELPLESS FURY THEY CARRY WITHIN.
I FELT THAT SAME FURY WHEN I FOUGHT BLACK JUSTICE.
← GRATEFUL
DEAD →
BLACK JUSTICE TOLD ME THINGS I DID NOT WANT TO HEAR.. ABOUT THE WOMAN I LOVED AND LOST THROUGH MY WEAKNESS...

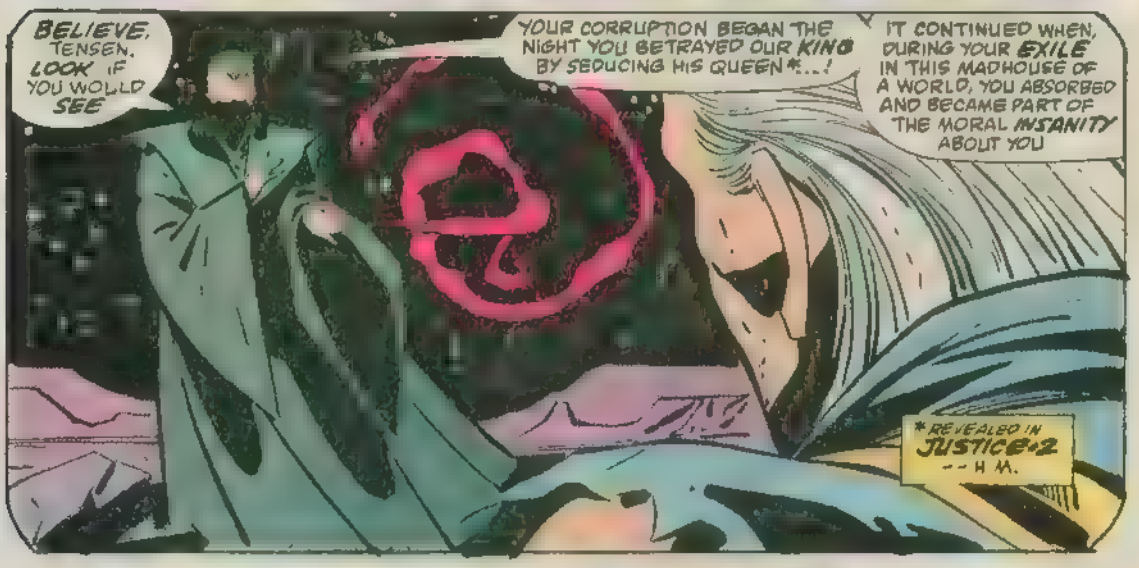
.. AND IN MY RAGE, I STRUCK HIM DOWN WITH MY RIGHTEOUS SWORD.
IN THAT MOMENT OF FURY MY CORRUPTION WAS MADE COMPLETE.
AND I REMEMBER WHAT THE WIZARD WEBSTRAL TOLD ME ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF MY CORRUPTION AS HE TRIED TO NURSE ME BACK TO HEALTH IN THE DESERT NIGHT.

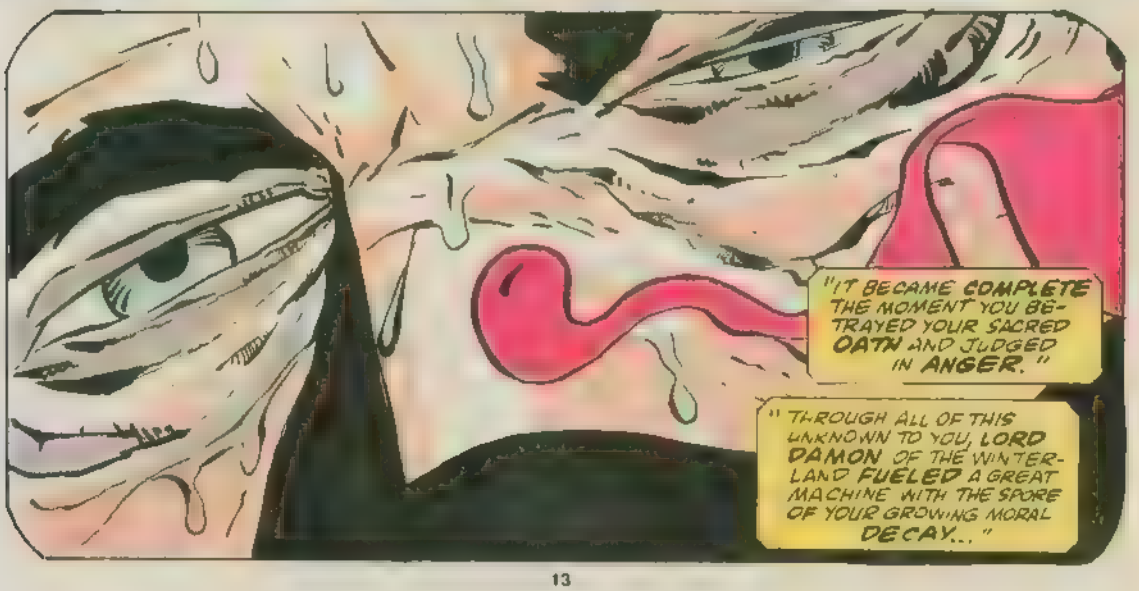
THEY CAME IN THE NIGHT, TENSEN.
A HORDE OF DARK WARRIORS FROM THE WINTERLAND, ARMED WITH A BLACK POWER OUR WARRIORS COULD NOT RESIST
NO.. DO NOT TRY TO MOVE, MY YOUNG FRIEND YOUR WOUNDS ARE SERIOUS, I'M AFRAID
WEBSTRAL TELL ME THIS IS A DREAM...


TELL ME SPRING STILL LIVES...
AH THAT I COULD, TENSEN..
BUT OUR LAND IS NO MORE.
THE BLACK POWER OF CORRUPTION HAS SPREAD ITS PALL OVER OUR FIELDS AND GARDENS. THE OLD LIFE WE KNEW IS AT END.
THIS BLACK POWER... WHERE DID IT COME FROM?

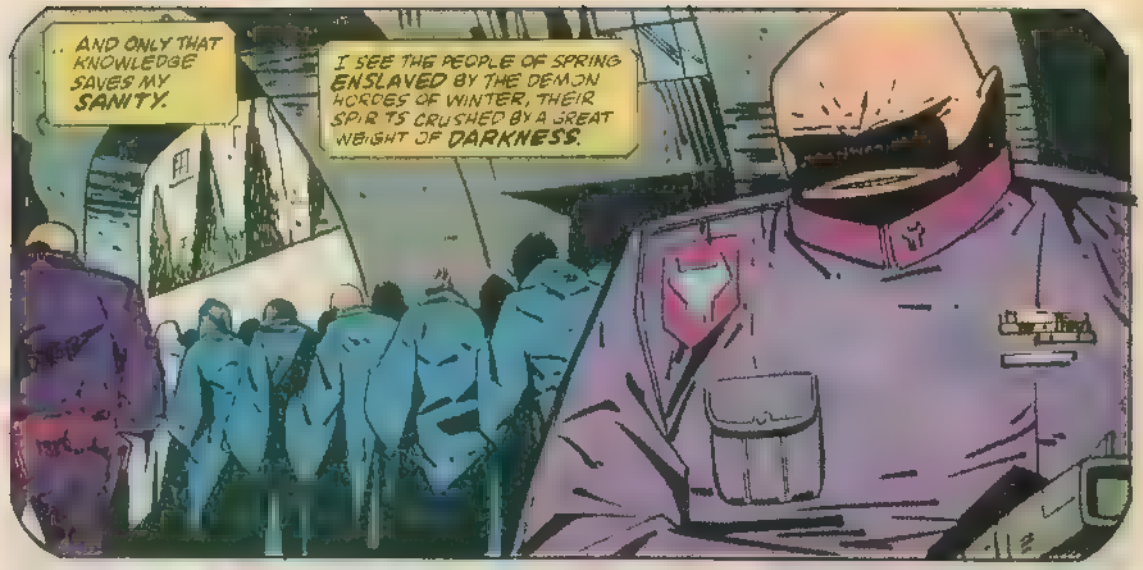

FROM YOU, TENSEN
THE CORRUPTION CAME FROM YOU.


YOU TOLD ME ONCE, THAT MY EXILE ON THIS WORLD... HAD CORRUPTED MY SOUL
NO!
BUT I CANNOT BELIEVE MY DOWNFALL COULD DESTROY MY HOMELAND...


BELIEVE, TENSEN. LOOK IF YOU WOULD SEE
YOUR CORRUPTION BEGAN THE NIGHT YOU BETRAYED OUR KING BY SEDUCING HIS QUEEN*...!
IT CONTINUED WHEN, DURING YOUR EXILE IN THIS MADHOUSE OF A WORLD, YOU ABSORBED AND BECAME PART OF THE MORAL INSANITY ABOUT YOU
*REVEALED IN JUSTICE #2 -- H.M.


"IT BECAME COMPLETE THE MOMENT YOU BETRAYED YOUR SACRED OATH AND JUDGED IN ANGER."
"THROUGH ALL OF THIS UNKNOWN TO YOU, LORD DAMON OF THE WINTERLAND FUELED A GREAT MACHINE WITH THE SPORE OF YOUR GROWING MORAL DECAY..."

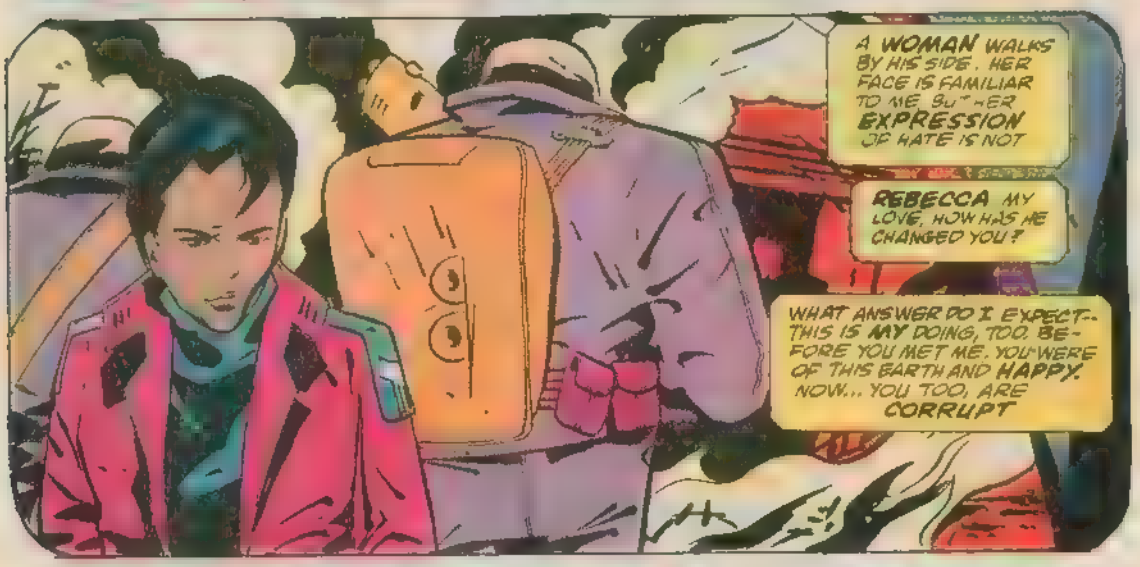
THIS MACHINE TRANSFORMED THE DARK ENERGY OF YOUR PERSONAL CORRUPTION INTO A BLACK POWER SUFFICIENT TO DESTROY THE DEFENSES OF SPRING
OBSERVE NOW THE CONSEQUENCES OF YOUR DEEDS.
I WANT TO LOOK AWAY BUT I CANNOT
WEBSTRAL'S SPELL EXPLODES ABOUT ME, BLOTTING THIS WORLD FROM VIEW, AND IN THE INSTANT, I SEEM TO HAVE RETURNED TO THE LAND OF SPRING
IT IS ONLY AN ILLUSION, I KNOW.

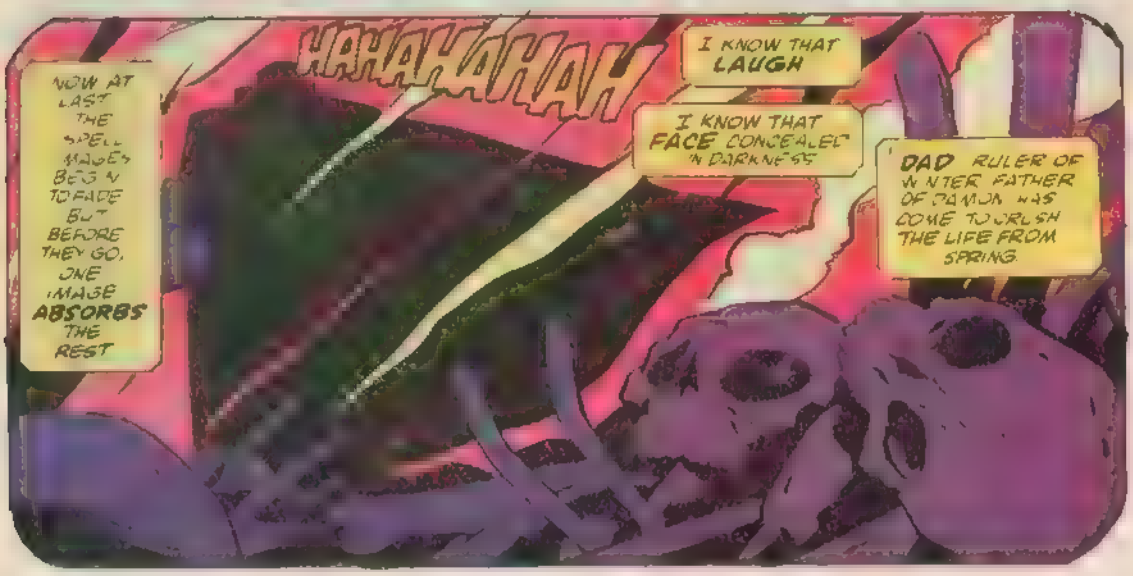

.. AND ONLY THAT KNOWLEDGE SAVES MY SANITY.
I SEE THE PEOPLE OF SPRING ENSLAVED BY THE DEMON HORDES OF WINTER, THEIR SPIRITS CRUSHED BY A GREAT WEIGHT OF DARKNESS.

I SEE MY KING.. AND MY SOUL [illegible]EAMS WITH REMORSE FOR HIS FATE IS MY DOING, AS SURELY AS IF I PREPARED THE STAKE WITH MY OWN HANDS.

I SEE MY QUEEN AND FURY OVERWHELMS REGRET UNTIL I RECALL THAT THIS, TOO MAY BE LAID AT MY DOOR

THE IMAGES COME MORE QUICKLY NOW, SAVAGE AND RELENTLESS.
IN THE NEWLY-BUILT TORTURE CHAMBER WHERE ONCE SPRING'S GARDENS BLOOMED, LORD DAMON CHORTLES WITH DELIGHT


A WOMAN WALKS BY HIS SIDE. HER FACE IS FAMILIAR TO ME, BUT HER EXPRESSION OF HATE IS NOT
REBECCA MY LOVE, HOW HAS HE CHANGED YOU?
WHAT ANSWER DO I EXPECT.. THIS IS MY DOING, TOO. BEFORE YOU MET ME. YOU WERE OF THIS EARTH AND HAPPY. NOW... YOU TOO, ARE CORRUPT


HAHAHAHAH
NOW AT LAST THE SPELL MAGES BEGIN TO FADE BUT BEFORE THEY GO, ONE IMAGE ABSORBS THE REST
I KNOW THAT LAUGH
I KNOW THAT FACE CONCEALED IN DARKNESS
DAD RULER OF WINTER FATHER OF DAMON HAS COME TO CRUSH THE LIFE FROM SPRING

YOU SEE HOW IT *IS*, TENSEN

I BARELY ESCAPED WITH MY LIFE I FLED TO THIS WORLD, HOPING TO *FIND* YOU... AND I HAVE.

NO.

TO OFFER YOU A CHANCE FOR *SALVATION*...

WHY? TO TORMENT ME WITH *GUILT?*

THE VEHICLE *STOPS*

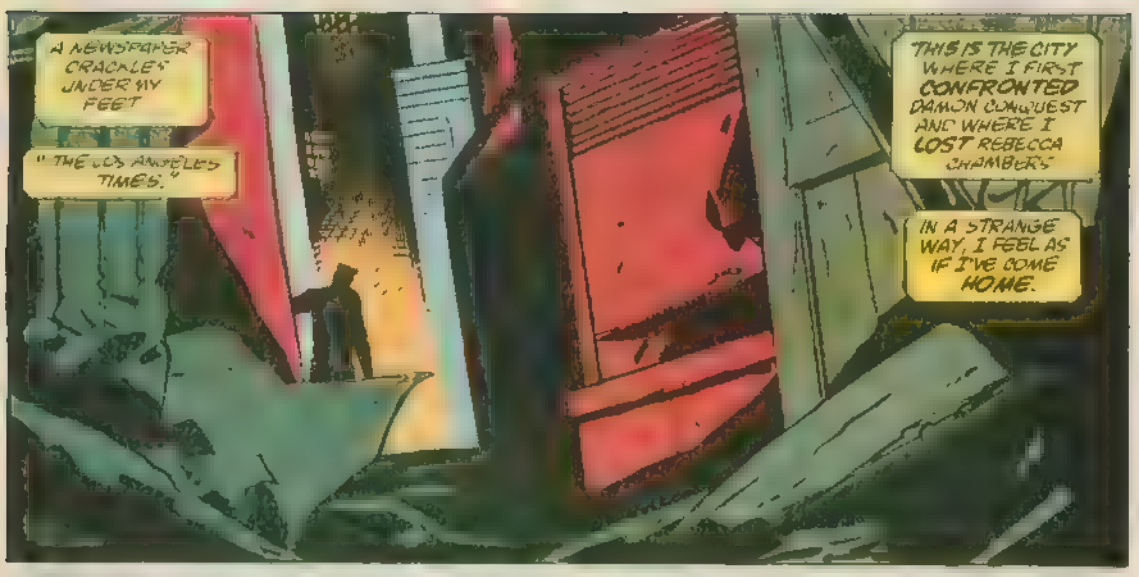
MEMORY [redacted]

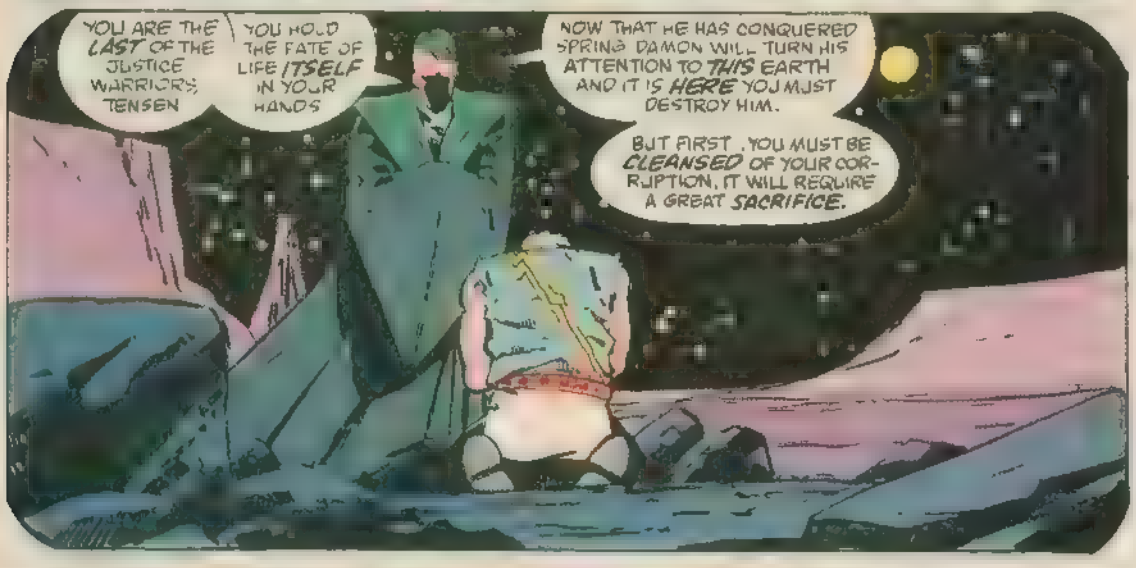
I WAIT, LISTENING AS THE DRIVER LEAVES

THEN I TOO, STEP INTO THE NIGHT

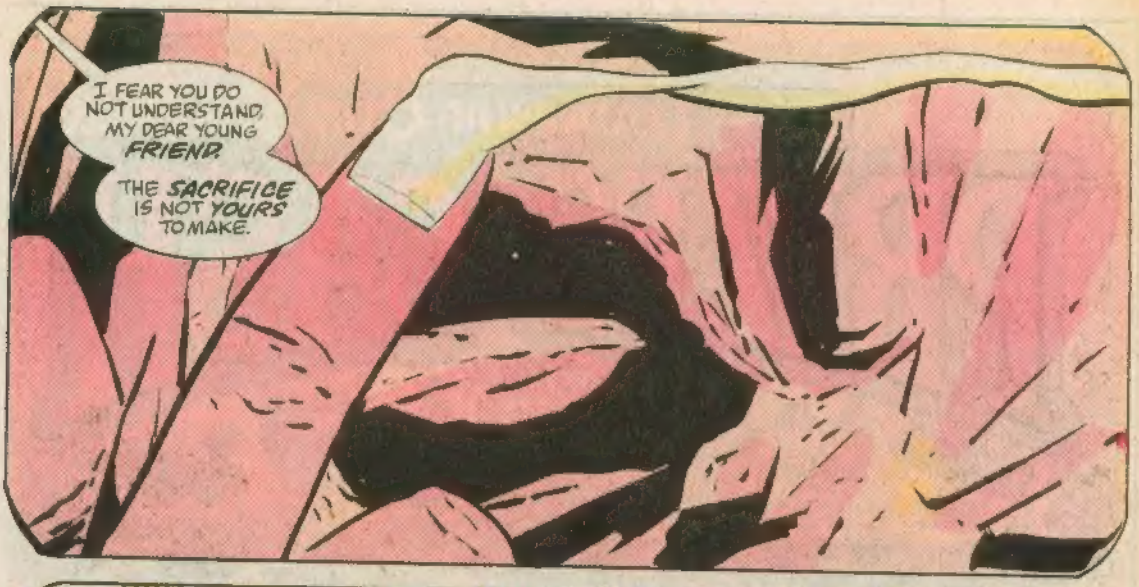
I HAVE RESTED MY STRENGTH IS *RETURNING* AS WEBSTRAL SAID IT WOULD

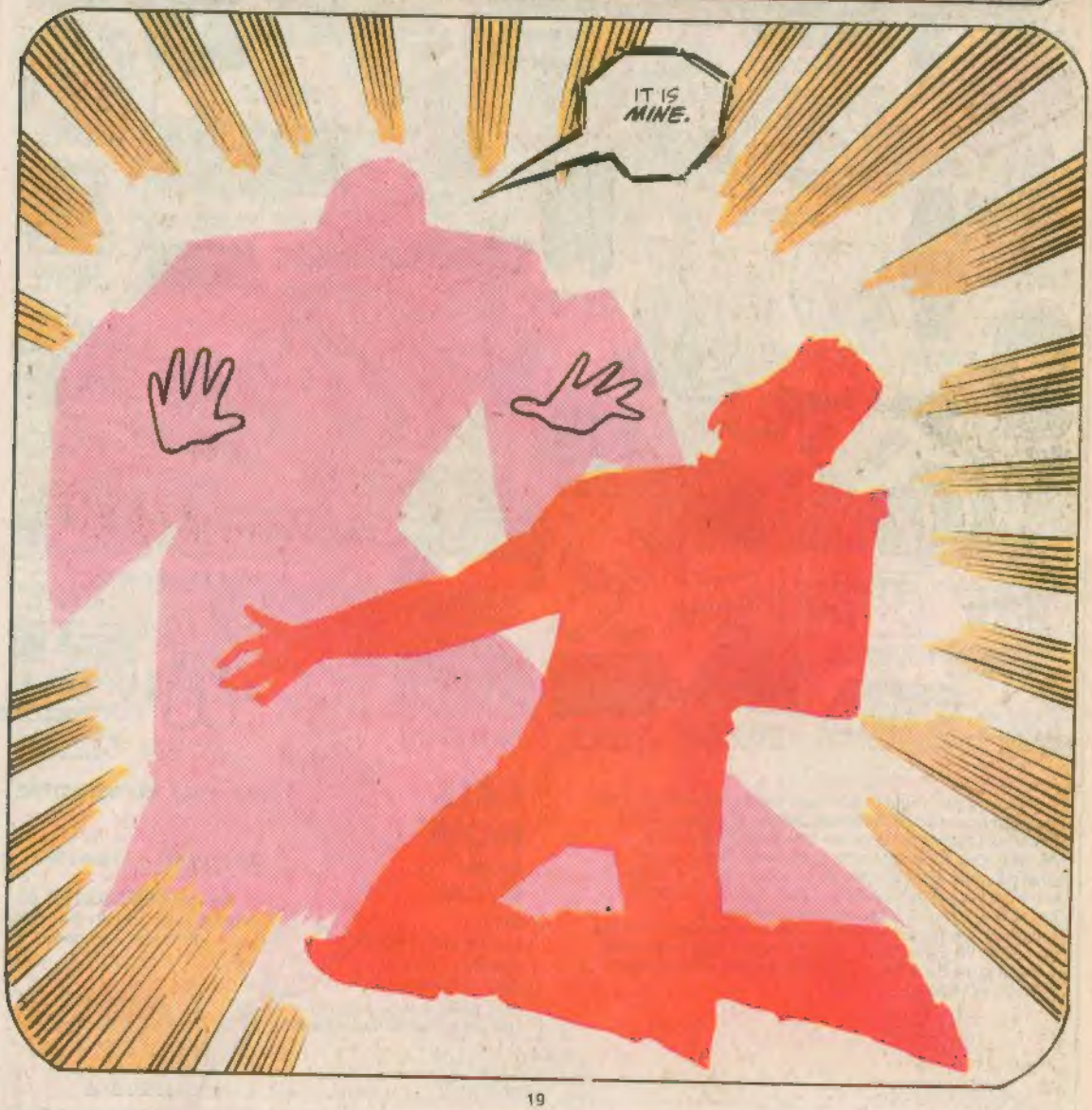
WHERE *AM* I I WONDER?

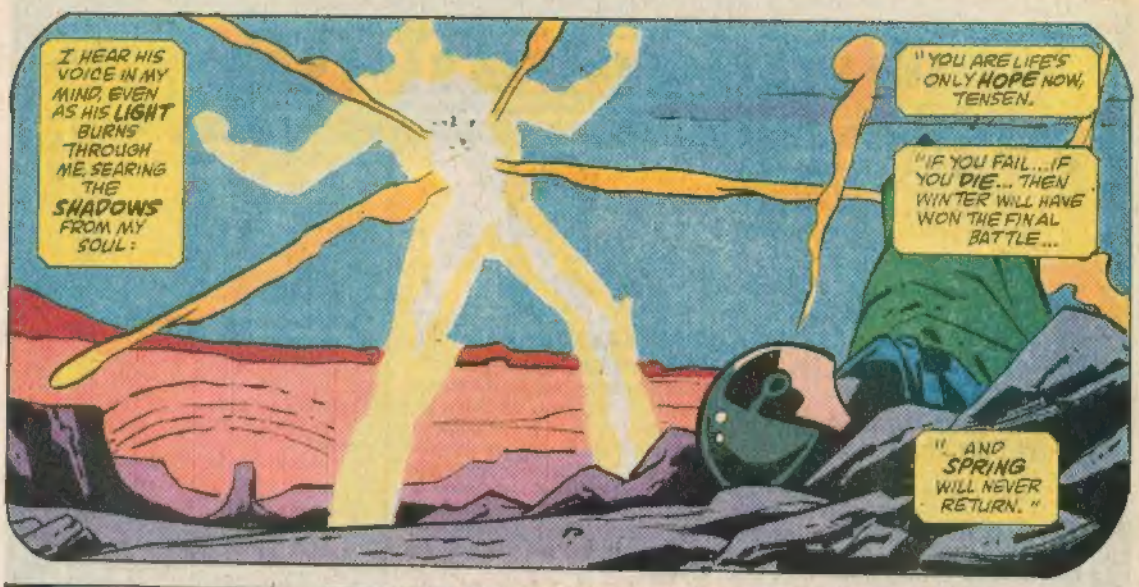

A NEWSPAPER CRACKLES UNDER MY FEET
"THE LOS ANGELES TIMES."
THIS IS THE CITY WHERE I FIRST CONFRONTED DAMON CONQUEST AND WHERE I LOST REBECCA CHAMBERS
IN A STRANGE WAY, I FEEL AS IF I'VE COME HOME.

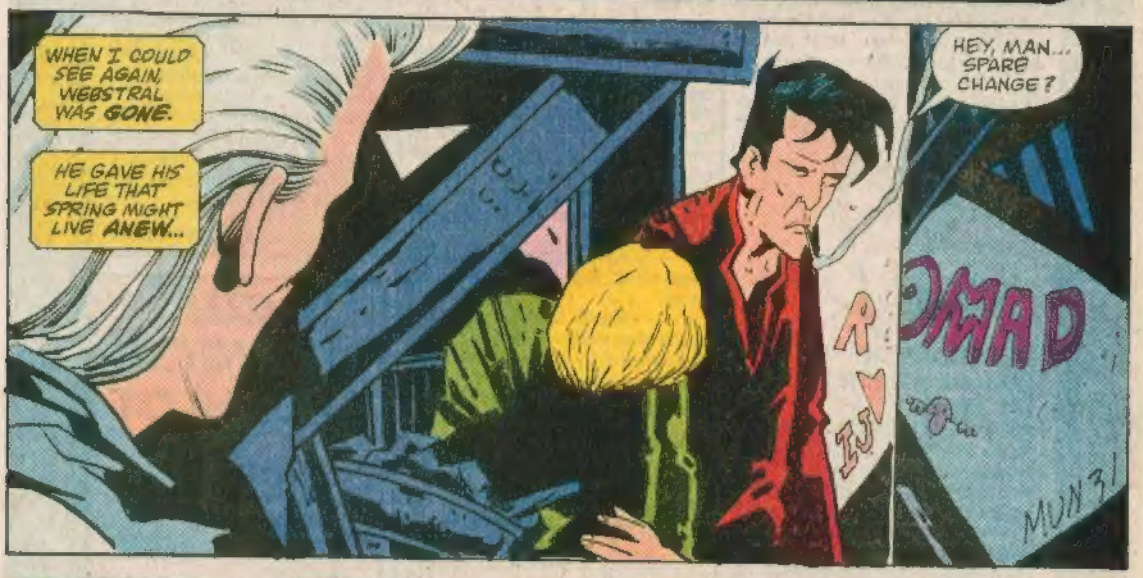

YOU ARE THE LAST OF THE JUSTICE WARRIORS, TENSEN
YOU HOLD THE FATE OF LIFE ITSELF IN YOUR HANDS
NOW THAT HE HAS CONQUERED SPRING DAMON WILL TURN HIS ATTENTION TO THIS EARTH AND IT IS HERE YOU MUST DESTROY HIM.
BUT FIRST, YOU MUST BE CLEANSED OF YOUR CORRUPTION. IT WILL REQUIRE A GREAT SACRIFICE.

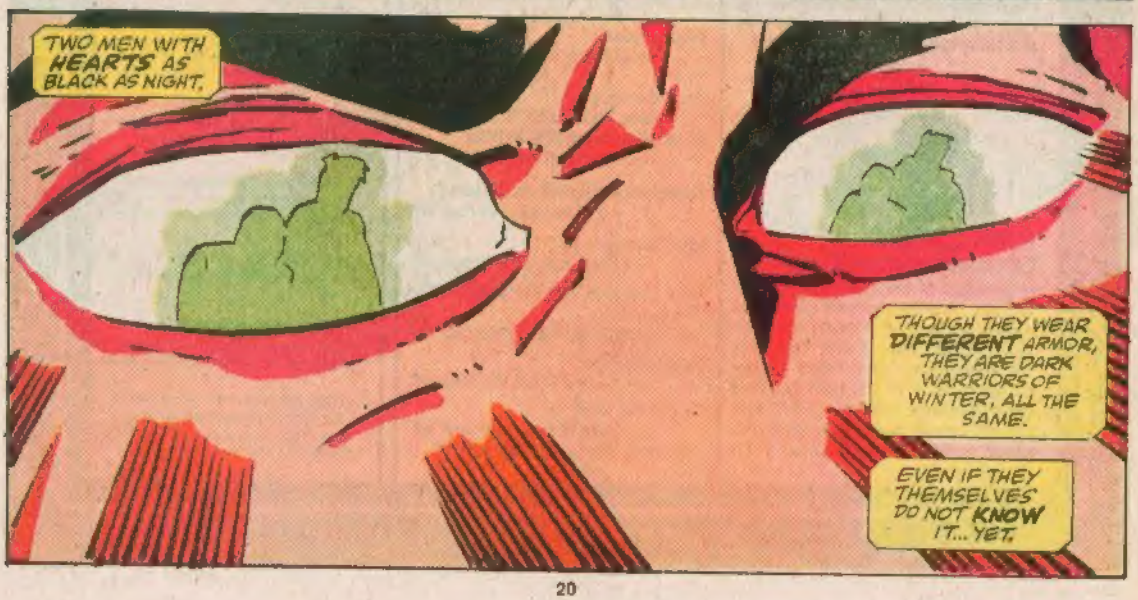
I WILL MAKE ANY SACRIFICE, WEBSTRAL

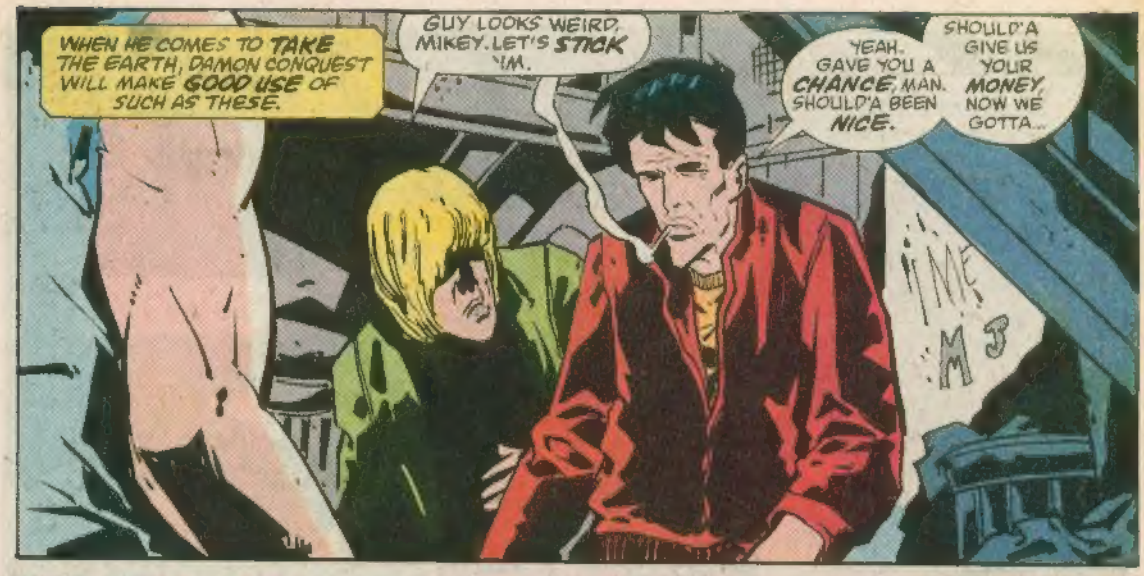

I FEAR YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND, MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND.
THE SACRIFICE IS NOT YOURS TO MAKE.

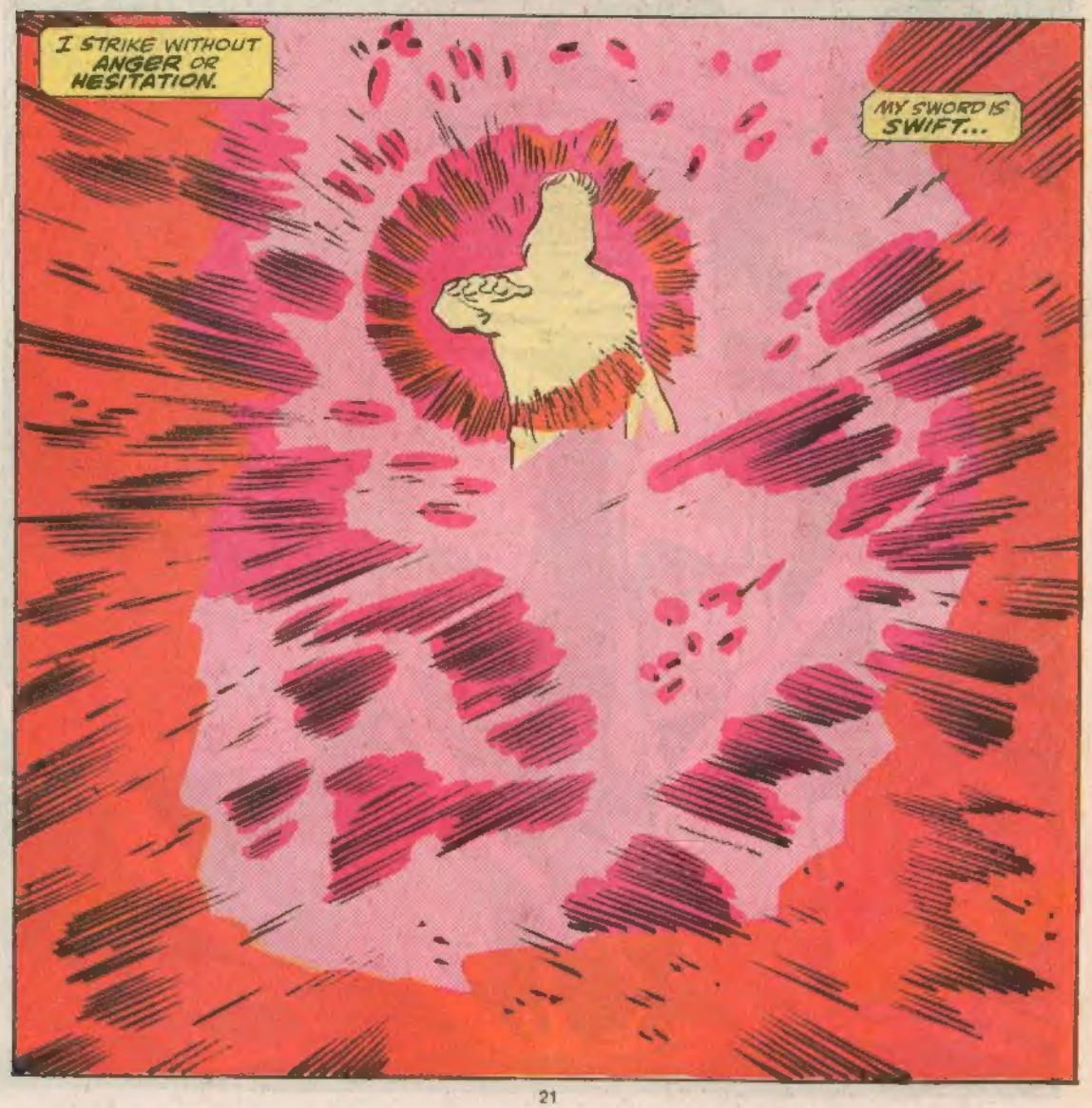

IT IS MINE.


I HEAR HIS VOICE IN MY MIND, EVEN AS HIS LIGHT BURNS THROUGH ME, SEARING THE SHADOWS FROM MY SOUL:
"YOU ARE LIFE'S ONLY HOPE NOW, TENSEN.
"IF YOU FAIL...IF YOU DIE... THEN WINTER WILL HAVE WON THE FINAL BATTLE...
"...AND SPRING WILL NEVER RETURN."


WHEN I COULD SEE AGAIN, WEBSTRAL WAS GONE.
HE GAVE HIS LIFE THAT SPRING MIGHT LIVE ANEW...
HEY, MAN... SPARE CHANGE?
MAD
MUN 31


TWO MEN WITH HEARTS AS BLACK AS NIGHT,
THOUGH THEY WEAR DIFFERENT ARMOR, THEY ARE DARK WARRIORS OF WINTER, ALL THE SAME.
EVEN IF THEY THEMSELVES DO NOT KNOW IT... YET.


WHEN HE COMES TO TAKE THE EARTH, DAMON CONQUEST WILL MAKE GOOD USE OF SUCH AS THESE.
GUY LOOKS WEIRD, MIKEY. LET'S STICK 'IM.
YEAH. GAVE YOU A CHANCE, MAN. SHOULD'A BEEN NICE.
SHOULD'A GIVE US YOUR MONEY, NOW WE GOTTA...


I STRIKE WITHOUT ANGER OR HESITATION.
MY SWORD IS SWIFT...

FOR I AM WHOLE... I AM JUSTICE...
...AND AT LONG LAST, MY DAY HAS COME.
LA BLUE
NEXT ISSUE:
NEW BEGINNINGS